

Table 2. New RN Graduate Retention Strategies

<i>Retention Strategies</i>	Number reported	Percent reported
Internship, preceptor, mentor programs	36	36.4
Orientation	33	33.3
Competitive wages, strong pay scale	7	7.1
Continuing education, professional practice development opportunities	7	7.1
Positive collegial environment	7	7.1
Flexible scheduling, control over shifts	6	6.1
Other	3	3.0
Total Responses	99	100.1%

Note: 76 hospitals responded to this question. Due to rounding, percents may not equal to 100.

Strategies Identified as Effective for both RN Graduate Recruitment and Retention

Internship, preceptor, and mentor programs were the strategies mentioned most often as effective for both recruiting and retaining new RN graduates. Competitive wages and flexible scheduling were also reported as effective tools for attracting and keeping new RN graduates, but were mentioned less often. An additional strategy identified for both recruitment and retention was having a positive collegial environment.

One surprising factor in the findings is that even the most often reported retention strategies of “internship, preceptor, mentor programs” and “orientation” accounted for only about one-third or less of the effective strategies used by hospitals. And other strategies, also identified as effective for both new RN graduate recruitment and retention, were reported less than 10% of the time.

Experienced RN Recruitment Strategies

The strategies that hospital Vice-Presidents of Nursing identified as effective for recruiting experienced RNs tended to be very different than those reported as effective for recruiting new RN graduates. Eighty-one (65%) North Carolina hospitals provided a total of 123 strategies for recruiting experienced RNs (see Table 3). No one strategy dominates the list, but four different approaches were mentioned equally often.

Advertising, including local, regional and statewide advertising, was the strategy reported about 18% of the time, followed closely by financial incentives such as competitive wages (17.1%) and the use of hiring bonuses (15.4%). An unexpected finding was the frequency of “word of mouth” as an effective strategy for recruiting experienced RNs. Word of mouth, as described by the respondents, is an informal process that occurs among current employees, based upon the hospital’s “employment” reputation.